Consultation Paper: seeking comments on respite care.

Introduction

Respite care provides support for carers and the people they care for. Respite care can be for a few hours or days or for longer periods depending on need. It can be provided in the care recipient's home, or in overnight respite cottages, day centres, or residential care facilities.

Care recipients and carers access respite care for a range of reasons that may include:

- to give a carer or care recipient a break from their usual care arrangements;
- for periods when a care recipient’s usual carer is not available, for example if they go on a planned holiday;
- in an emergency, such as when the care recipient’s carer is unexpectedly unavailable;
- to allow a carer time to attend to responsibilities outside of their caring role;
- to access care when the care recipient is in need of palliative care.

Respite care has not been reviewed in some time, and your views are sought on whether the current arrangements meet the needs of carers, care recipients and providers.

Background

The Aged Care Financing Authority (ACFA) is an independent statutory committee whose role is to provide independent, transparent advice to the Australian Government on financing and funding issues in the aged care sector. ACFA considers issues in the context of maintaining a viable, accessible and sustainable aged care industry that balances the needs of consumers, providers, the workforce, taxpayers, investors and financiers.

ACFA has been tasked by the Minister for Aged Care, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, with undertaking a study and reporting on the increasing use of respite care and the appropriateness of the current arrangements, including funding structures, for providers and consumers.

The reporting date for this project is 31 October 2018.
To assist in developing its report to the Minister, ACFA is seeking the views of stakeholders and invites submissions on the current:

- use of residential respite care;
- use of respite care services provided under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (including flexible, centre based and cottage respite care services) and respite care in home care packages and their interaction with residential respite care;
- interaction of respite care arrangements and other forms of care;
- respite care arrangements including funding for providers;
- funding arrangements for consumers including the costs they pay.

Further information about respite care can be found in Attachment A.

We are seeking your feedback

ACFA is seeking views on the increasing use of residential respite care and the appropriateness of the current arrangements under the following items:

1. the process for applying for and seeking access to respite care;
2. bottlenecks or delays in accessing either residential or non-residential respite care;
3. whether current provider funding structures for the provision of residential respite care are appropriate;
4. whether the current system for allocating respite bed days to residential care providers impacts the availability and provision of respite care;
5. costs to consumers and/or carers seeking to access respite care;
6. impact of the current arrangements on equity of access for respite care recipients, including access in an emergency, or to residential respite for periods of less than one week;
7. any unintended impacts or consequences of the current arrangements supporting access to residential respite care;
8. use of Commonwealth Home Support Programme respite care services and the interaction with other programs that deliver respite services, including residential respite care;
9. any other matters relevant to respite care.

The consultation paper is open for comment until 5:00pm Friday 13 April 2018.

Feedback can be sent by email to ACFA.Secretariat@health.gov.au or by post to:

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